

Nursery and Primary 1 at George Heriot's School





Welcome

A very warm welcome to Nursery and Primary One at George Heriot's. Choosing the right nursery and school for your child can be a daunting prospect and we hope that this leaflet will give you some insight into our safe, happy, exciting environment.

At Heriot's, children are encouraged to do their best and to be kind to each other. We believe this leads to happiness and success. To visit our classrooms and see this in action, please call our friendly Admissions team to arrange a visit. We will be delighted to show you around

The Junior School consists of three stages: Early Years (Nursery to P2), Middle Primary (P3-P5), and Upper Primary (P6-P7). Each section is led by a Junior School Depute who reports to the Deputy Head on curricular matters. Each Depute is responsible for the continuity of the children's learning, wellbeing and progression through the school. They, along with the Head and Deputy Head of Junior School, make up the Junior School Leadership Team.

As well as class teachers, children in the Junior School have weekly lessons with specialist teachers in PE and Music in the Early Years. This input increases as the children progress through the Junior School and by Primary Seven the children have specialist teaching for PE/Games, Music, Art, Computing, Modern Languages and Drama. This ensures that our young people already know many Senior School subject departments and teachers ahead of moving into Senior School.

Junior School children also work with or may have support from:

- An Educational Psychologist/Early Intervention Specialist
- The Learning Enhancement Department
- The Support for Learning Department
- Junior School Support Staff
- S6 pupil helpers
- Matron
- Outdoor Learning Coordinator
- Science Coordinator
- Able Pupil Coordinator
- Hugo, our 'Pets as Therapy' dog.

The Nursery

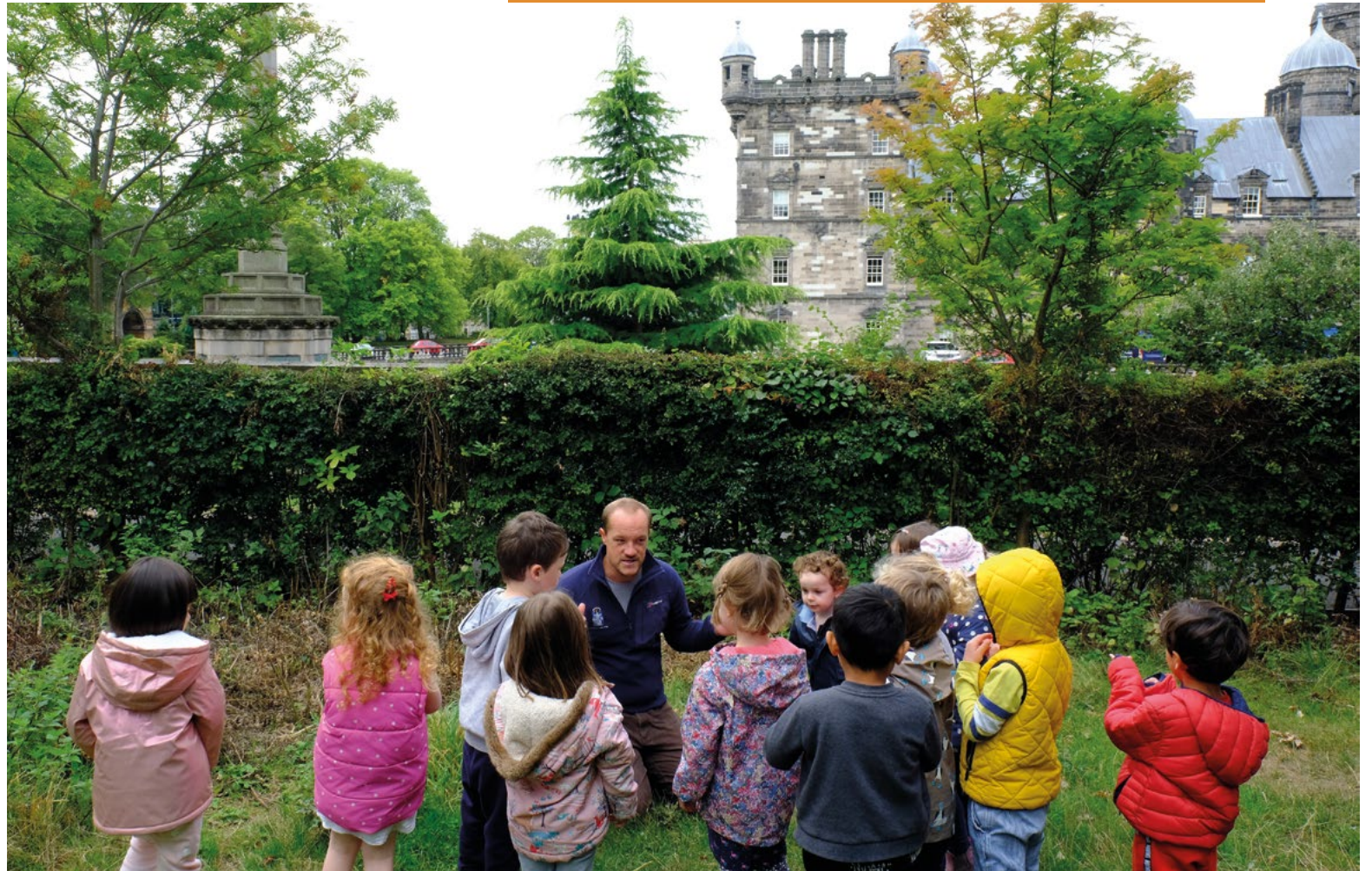
Our Nursery offers a bespoke one-year experience ahead of children starting Primary One. The Nursery is located in a purpose-built building on campus, with access to its own play area and mud kitchen, as well as the wider school grounds, including the lawns and our wildlife garden.

There are four key worker groups, comprising of 8 children per group. The Nursery is staffed by fully qualified Junior School teachers and Early Years Practitioners.

The Nursery staff plan activities and experiences, both indoors and outdoors. The main focus is to assist the children with emotional, personal and social development, as well as the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. Each child's progress is observed and recorded with reference to the Curriculum for Excellence, Early level and progress is tracked and shared with parents. Nursery experiences and planned by the team to ensure that there is a balance between child-led learning and adult-guided activities. This approach ensures that each child develops the skills and characteristics to enable them to reach their full potential.

“My favourite things to do at Nursery are playing in the water tray and home corner, with my friends”

Nursery pupil



“My school is special because all the activities are really nice”

P1 pupil



Primary One

The main intake stage is into Primary One, with three classes, each comprising 22 children. The classes are taught by their class teacher with assistance from Early Years Practitioners along with the various specialists and helpers.

Primary One classrooms are located in the light, bright Greyfriars Building which is situated on the soft playground.

Children are introduced to school life in a happy and structured environment. Each child is treated as an individual and encounters a rich and varied curriculum encompassing academic, emotional, cultural, social and physical experiences. We carry out a small assessment at the start of Primary One which enables us to tailor work to suit each child. We do not want anyone to be put off learning because the work is too difficult and we want to ensure pupils are suitably challenged. We aim to get it just right. The children work in groups and the groups change frequently to accommodate individual pace of learning.

Learning Enhancement

The Learning Enhancement Department (LE) is unique to Heriot's. Introduced in 1999, it has a huge impact on children's learning and wellbeing and, in 2019, was formally recognised by SAPERE as gold standard.

The LE team of experienced Primary teachers has devised a curriculum for pupils from Nursery to Primary 7 comprising activities on Resilience, Emotional Intelligence, Philosophical Enquiry, Thinking Skills and Diversity. We believe that the subjects taught in this department build confidence and aid lifelong learning.

In the Nursery, children learn to identify and relate to feelings and emotions. Children engage in magical journey activities to learn about their brain, including a 'Good Mood Hunt'. In P1 and P2 children learn why emotions are important, through games, stories and relaxation exercises.

Through Philosophy, children learn how to respect each other's thoughts and opinions and, where relevant, to politely disagree.

Our bespoke Diversity Curriculum encourages pupils to be aware of differences in society. In Early Years, the children take part in activities which encourage them to be aware of and celebrate the differences that surround us.

Further information about our unique Learning Enhancement Department can be provided by our Admissions Office.



“Philosophy frog helps us to answer questions and we use ‘because’ to help us to say why”

P1 pupil

“I like the teachers
because they are kind”

P1 pupil



Pastoral Care

The promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing starts in the Nursery and is built upon as the pupils progress through the Junior School. Children are taught to recognise their emotions and how these can manifest. Much of this is covered through the Learning Enhancement curriculum.

A dedicated Principal Teacher oversees and coordinates pastoral support for all children, while Junior School staff receive training in childhood trauma and the importance of secure attachments.

Each child receives personalised care from their class teacher as well as a range of other staff who provide wellbeing support. A recent addition to our team is Hugo, the 'Pets as Therapy' dog. He loves to spend time with the children, helping them to relax, and aiding communication.

Strong, supportive relationships between staff and pupils are a vital part of our approach. Therefore, we timetable 'conferencing' every week. This is the chance for each child to spend one-to-one time with the class teacher to discuss any concerns that they may have and discuss next steps.

Wrap Around Care and morning drop off

Wrap Around Care (WAC), staffed by the Heriot's team, is available until 6pm every day during term time. Early Years children are collected from their classrooms at the end of the day by WAC staff. The children have a snack on arrival in WAC and then participate in a variety of activities. We make as much use of the outdoor space as possible.

Regular bookings can be made, as can ad hoc bookings. Charges are based on the amount of time your child is at WAC on any afternoon.

WAC is available from 8.30 am – 5.30 pm during all the school holidays (except Christmas and Easter weekend). A full programme of trips, workshops and activities take place at these times.

As well as after school care, we also offer a drop-off facility from 7.30 am each morning. This is based in our Refectory where children have the opportunity to purchase breakfast items, should they wish. There is no additional charge for this service beyond any food purchased. Our Junior School Support Staff supervise the children and escort the Early Years children to their classroom each morning.



“P7 prefects help me
in the playground”

P1 pupil

After School activities

There are a number of after school activities for P1 children, many of which are sports, technology, music and art based. The number of after school activities available increases as the children move through the Junior School.

Application

Unlike the rest of the school, places in our Nursery are allocated on a first come first served basis and with sibling priority where possible. We also try to ensure a gender balance. All applications received are logged in the order of receipt and places are allocated a year ahead of the children joining. Whilst most Nursery children proceed to Primary One, entry to the school is not automatic. All Nursery children sit the School's Primary One Entrance Assessment in January.

Application to Primary One should be made no later than 1 December of the year prior to entry. Children are invited to attend an assessment in January.

"I like playing with my friends.
I have lots of friends"

P1 pupil



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George Heriot's School is governed by George Heriot's Trust.

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